LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

A CALL TO ACTION
William Gallacher, M.P.

NOTES OF THE MONTH
R.P.D.

THE SECOND FRONT
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THE CO-OPERATIVE CENTURY
T. Vernon

BOOK REVIEW

A CALL TO ACTION

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JULY 1944

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OUR READERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES:

"Eight of the Boys": "At this great historical moment, the last phase of the struggle against the hated Fascists, it is as well to remember the great role played in this long and bitter struggle by our dynamic little MONTHLY—and to dig a little deeper into the pocket to ensure its continuance in the forward march which will follow the crushing of Fascism. New times—new tasks!"

J. Bacon: "If in future I can send any more, I will do so, because I know, although there are many calls on my income, the hardest sacrifice is the lives being given in the cause for freedom all over the world, the cause so brilliantly upheld by the LABOUR MONTHLY."

'K.M.G., ex-Rhodesia (Monthly)": "There must be a few ex-Rhodesian progressives home by now, and this might encourage some of the other stinkers to dig down."

"Old Age Pensioner": "If we cannot get Target we must pay more for our L.M. So I am paying 8d. for it."

Canadian Signalman: "I just can't do without the magazine."

WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES:

Last month we achieved our target and warned our readers against complacency. But the warning was not heeded by fifteen pounds' worth of potential donors. Will they please take very careful note and help us this time, and having done it once, continue regularly?

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(*Continued on page iii. of cover*)

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A CALL TO ACTION

History has many dark and sombre pages. Almost it seemed in one period after another that the light of liberty had gone out for ever and that mankind was doomed to everlasting night.

But always men and women were found who, ready to dare all, battled against the hosts of darkness to save and preserve the sacred flame of liberty.

Never in all its dark pages does history reveal such a menace to liberty as Europe has experienced during the past years of Nazi domination.

Whole countries held down with heavy chains of terror and fear—the same dread menace brooding over all the world.

The day of deliverance was promised when the steel-hearted men and women of Stalingrad, within the gates of that historic city, destroyed the vaunted prowess of the Nazi armies.

The promise is now moving towards fulfilment. The army of liberation, mighty in courage, unconquerable in spirit, is even now on the soil of France, smashing the chains and setting free the slaves.

Comrades, these are great days, greater than any we have known. We must rise to the height of the best that is in our land. No laggards, no lying back. On the Western front, on the Eastern front, as over there in Italy and the mountains of Yugoslavia, the warriors for freedom dare all and give all. We can do no less. Every man, every woman to his or her post, with and for the armies of liberation, never halting, never stopping till the final blow is struck—till the last chain is broken and mankind, with the torch of liberty high overhead, marches forward to Freedom and to Peace.

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Great Offensive—1941-1944—Smashing the Western Wall—A Victory for Democracy—And for Unity—Blow to Fifth Column—Vindication of National Unity—Europe in Movement—France and the United Nations—Urgency of Recognition—Foundations of International Co-operation—Decisive Battles in Front—United Will to Victory—Practical Tasks—Building the Future.

THE battle is joined. The landing in Northern France has opened that combined offensive of the United Nations, for which all opponents of Fascism have striven during these years, which was finally planned at Teheran last December, and which, once launched, can only end and will end with the complete destruction of the power of Fascism in Europe. It is a great, a glorious and a serious moment. The spirit of all those millions who have given their lives in the bitter struggle against Fascism during these many years will be with those British and American soldiers who are now storming the gates of the Fascist hell; for the hour of avenging and liberation is at hand. We are still only at the beginning of these final battles. The greatest caution, soberness and realism is necessary in estimating what has been accomplished and what remains to be accomplished. But we can already testify to the magnificent achievement of this beginning, and to the gigantic change it means in the entire world situation.

JUNE 6, 1944, stands with June 22, 1941, as a turning point of world history June, 1941, brought into being that Grand Alliance of the democratic nations of East and West, whose division had brought such costly consequences and made possible the growth of Fascism, and whose union heralded the doom of Fascism and opened the vision of a new future for mankind. June, 1944, has begun the Grand Offensive of the Alliance in action, which backs up that union and agreement with the power of deeds, and whose victorious accomplishment is the indispensable condition, the price of blood, for the realisation of those aims, and the guarantee of their future achievement. June, 1944, has proclaimed to the world that that Alliance is no temporary diplomatic manoeuvre, but a partnership of life and death of the democratic nations in a great ordeal fighting with the entire strength of their peoples to determine the future of the world. June, 1944, is a victory for Democracy, a victory for the Unity of the Peoples, a victory for all the aims proclaimed in the Teheran Agreement.

THE signal military achievement of the landing in Northern France is visible to all. Just as during these three years the Soviet generals and fighters have smashed the legend of the invincible Nazi armies, so now the Anglo-American generals and fighters have smashed the legend of the impregnable European fortress. In June, 1942, Goebbels's organ, *Das Reich*, could still attempt to claim:

> Of course, war on two fronts would be disastrous for Germany. But thanks to his foresight the Fuehrer has correctly estimated the situation. By the time the Anglo-Saxons are ready for their operations, Russia will be put out of commission.

Stalingrad and the long victorious advance of the Soviet armies have smashed that boast. On September 30, 1942, Hitler could still attempt to throw out his swaggering defiance:—

> Let me assure Mr. Churchill that wherever he may choose for his next attack he

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may consider himself lucky if he remains on land for nine hours.

Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery and the Anglo-American fighting forces have smashed that boast.

THE cracking of the Western Wall, whose elaborate fortifications and defences, even if not up to the level of the fantastic Nazi propaganda pictures put out to intimidate the credulous and provide ammunition for the opponents of the Second Front, were nevertheless the severest test for any assaulting force, and the consolidation and extension of the base in Northern France during the first fortnight represent a feat of combined land, sea and air operations, of generalship, organisation, bravery and fighting power which raises the confidence of the democratic peoples all over the world. Whatever the tough fighting still in front, this initial success has disorganised the initial Nazi plans, and strengthened the conditions for further success.

MORE: It represents a success for the united efforts of the alliance: for the combined efforts of the fighting forces and the workers in war industry, whose exertions during these years have piled up the colossal scale of armament and supplies now beginning to come into operation and to facilitate the cracking of the Nazi defences; of the guerilla fighters and resistance movements which have weakened Nazi strength and resources; of the advancing armies in Italy whose campaign helped to prepare the way for the offensive; and of the Soviet armies, whose three years' battle broke the back of the Nazi armies, and whose blood, in Ehrenburg's phrase, corroded the fortifications of the Atlantic Wall. It represents the beginning of a combined offensive, whose full scope will still unfold itself, and of which the Italian advance of the Eighth and Fifth Armies, the lightning thrusts of the half-million strong French Armies of the Interior, the new drive of Marshal Tito's forces, and the Finland offensive of the Leningrad Divisions are all an integral part, presaging the heavier blows to come. It represents the combined strategy of Teheran; Teheran in action; Teheran blasting the path forward and laying the foundations of the world's future. "The operation of the plans adopted at Teheran," the Prime Minister declared on June 20, "is being steadily unrolled, and the months of this summer may, by the victories of the Allied campaign, bring full success to the cause of freedom."

NOT less outstanding is the political significance of the offensive. It represents a blow to the Fifth Column, to the defeatists, to all the reactionaries who poured out their propaganda against the Second Front and sought for a stalemate peace. To the last they strove to delay the Second Front or to limit its scope. Now their efforts have received a signal defeat. The battle is joined, and can only be carried forward to complete victory, to the invasion of Germany, to the Teheran aim of the complete destruction of the German war machine. The endeavours of the Fifth Column are not ended; they will be resumed, as the military situation, whether of new successes or of temporary setbacks or difficulties, provide opportunity. But the ground is crumbling under their feet. Delay and inaction was their breeding ground. The fires of battle, and the unity and fighting will of the nations advancing to victory, will burn out their poison and smash their undermining efforts to rob the peoples of the fruits of their sacrifices.

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THE launching of the Western offensive is no less a blow to all those hesitant, defeatist or disruptive elements in the labour movement or on the left, who gave way to moods of frustration and scepticism; who sought to turn the main fire against Churchill, the organiser of the offensive; or who demanded that Labour should commit political suicide by disrupting the Coalition on the eve of the offensive for victory. It is a blow to the pacifist or weak-kneed elements, conscious or unconscious allies of the Munichites, who on the very eve of the offensive sought to blunt the fighting edge of the people's will to victory by pleas for easier terms for Germany, or to invoke distorted arguments from the Atlantic Charter to further schemes for salvaging German imperialist domination in Europe. The correctness of the policy of national unity for victory over Fascism has been demonstrated with renewed force by the offensive. National unity will be strengthened by the common effort of the offensive, and must be still further strengthened for complete victory.

THE effects of the opening of the Western offensive among all the peoples of Nazi-occupied Europe will be no less far-reaching. All the sedulously fostered Nazi myths, that "the Western Allies will never act," "the Anglo-Americans are fooling you with false promises," etc., which fed on delay and on every utterance of reactionary forces in Britain or the United States against the Second Front, are now exploded by the decisive answer of action. Already the national uprising in France has reached a scale which has found reflection in General Eisenhower's communique of June 17. Reports of the reactions in other occupied countries are still to come. Despite all broadcast appeals to passivity, the battle is extending, and will still further extend, with the advance of military operations, from the armies to the entire peoples of Europe in movement, determined to strike their blows and play an active and not passive part in the cause of their own liberation.

IN this situation it is of the most urgent importance that there should be no further delay in the full recognition of the French Provisional Government and in the fullest support with arms and provisions and supplies to the French Army of the Interior. This is not merely vital on political, diplomatic and democratic grounds, but on the most plain and pressing military grounds. After the unmistakable indication of General Eisenhower's communique, with its official recognition of "the Army of the French Forces of the Interior," further civilian obstruction would be the more indefensible. To delay recognition is to thrust away allies; to rebuff French national feeling; to encourage all hesitant and *attentiste* elements; to raise the danger of creating walls of suspicion between French patriots and the allied armies of liberation; and thus to make more difficult the task of British and American soldiers. Press correspondents have reported how the population of the liberated districts, in the midst of welcome and jubilation, have asked: "But where are our soldiers? Where is our Government?"

WHAT must be the feeling of French patriots to see this hesitation to recognise their Provisional Government, which has fought for four years, and which is more closely bound up with and representative of the active struggle of the nation than any other European Allied Government operating outside home territory, while recognition is freely accorded to far less representative elements of other countries? What must have been their feeling to see that the first visit of the British Premier, their champion, was accompanied, not

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by their own leader, De Gaulle, but by the traducer of France, Smuts? What must have been their feeling to see that the first liberation of France was entrusted solely to British, American and Canadian troops, while the French soldiers, who had been equipped and armed in Africa for this enterprise, who had been welcomed to fight alongside their Allies in Africa or in Italy, should appear to have been accorded no part so far in liberating the soil of their own country? No less serious are the questions of administration arising, and which will arise, in liberated territory. It is urgent to correct this situation, alike in the interests of the British and American soldiers, for the speedy success of the invasion, and for the whole future of France and Europe.

THE opening of the offensive strengthens the bonds of the alliance of the United Nations, and the whole basis of international collaboration, not only in the war, but for the future after victory. The common battle draws close Anglo-American comradeship of the fighting men and the peoples in a union of common purpose which can and will prove stronger than the discordant voices of isolated reactionary elements who seek already to calculate in terms of future conflict. The warmth of generous and unstinted appreciation on the part of the tried and tested Soviet fighters and Soviet people has found stirring expression in Stalin's tribute to the achievement of the invasion. The mutual confidence of common battle and achievement, of blows delivered with the entire strength of each nation in the alliance against the common enemy for a common victory, cements the foundations to build the structure of international co-operation and continued partnership after victory, for the maintenance of the peace of the world and for new construction. The conferences and conversations which are due to take place between the allies during these coming months, to prepare the lines of post-war settlement, alike in the political field for world-security organisation, and in the economic field, carrying forward the general principles already agreed at Teheran, will take place in an atmosphere of deepened understanding and confidence, following the opening of the Western offensive which heralds the execution of the concerted Teheran strategy for victory.

WE can never for one moment afford to forget that we are still only in the opening phases of the vast and formidable operations involved in this combined offensive for the final destruction of Nazi power in Europe, and that the heaviest and decisive battles lie in front. The landing in Northern France has been officially stated to be "the first of a series of landings in force on the European Continent." Five hundred square miles of France have been liberated in the first stage of the establishment of a foothold; two million square miles of Europe remain to be liberated. The German command, according to the Allied headquarters statement, had at the close of the first ten days 300,000 men, of whom 200,000 were fighting troops (about one-quarter, non-German) meeting the invasion armies —equivalent to one-third of the divisions in North Western Europe, and not yet drawing off divisions from elsewhere. General Eisenhower, with the landing in Normandy, had brought into action as yet only a limited proportion of the total forces under his command. The main forces on both sides have still to be engaged.

THE enemy, faced with the prospect of total defeat, will fight with every weapon in his still considerable armoury. The attempts to harass the lines of communication and supply, production and civil organisation in Southern England by the inten-

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sified raids with the new pilotless planes are a reminder that Britain, as the base of the invasion, is an integral part of the battlefront, and that there is in reality one single front, in which all are engaged. Hence it is essential for public opinion to be prepared for every type of eventuality before us, and for the maximum combined effort which will be essential for victory, and to be united in the determination to ensure that the full strength of the alliance in action shall be exerted to carry forward the offensive to complete and speedy victory.

THE greatest responsibility rests on those who have been the most active in the forefront in mobilising opinion for the opening of the Western offensive, and for the Communists in the first place, who have been identified in the public mind with the call for the Second Front as the sure path to speediest victory, to show now by their response, their enthusiasm and their activity, how they can play an even more outstanding part in mobilising support and practical action and assisting to strengthen in every way the united national effort for the success of the offensive. The Communist Party directs all its efforts for the fullest mobilisation of the entire strength of the people in support of the offensive and for speedy victory. In particular, we must strive to ensure the continuity of production under all conditions; for the maximum effort in war production, especially with reference to the arms industries, coal, the railways, road transport, the docks and shipbuilding and ship repair, and agriculture; for practical help of the civilian population in connection with the harvest, through blood transfusion and in voluntary help in the hospitals; for solidarity with the fighting forces, linking up factories and local efforts with service units and war hospitals; and to strengthen the unity of the labour movement and national unity in fulfilment of the common tasks of the offensive.

THE aims of the offensive are bound up with the aims for the future after victory. In the midst of the opening days of the offensive the Communist Party has published its statement *Britain for the People*, to set forward its proposals for tackling the immediate problems which will follow the defeat of Nazi Germany and the ending of the war in Europe, and to show the path forward for the British people, on the basis of the broadest unity of the labour movement and all progressive sections of the nation. As opportunity permits, it will be important to deal further with the significance of these proposals, in relation to the proposals put forward in the Government's White Paper on Employment Policy and other documents. These proposals cannot be separated from the tasks of the offensive; for victory over Fascism is the first condition for their achievement. But they have an essential part in the mobilisation of the people for the struggle in front; for the opening of the final offensive and the sure prospect of victory makes it indispensable that progressive opinion must be prepared and united on the practical tasks which will follow victory; and the stronger the guarantee that the hopes and aspirations of the people for a better Britain after the war can and will be fulfilled, the greater will be the confidence and inspiration of the fighting men and the entire people in the present battles. The policy of the Communist Party is a policy to win the war and win the peace. The unity and strength of the people in these critical days can achieve such a victory over Fascism and for the cause of the United Nations as will ensure also in the days of peace the victory of all the aims and aspirations of the people.

R. P. D.

June 21, 1944.

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The Second Front

by WILLIAM RUST

ON the twelfth day of the opening of the Second Front in Europe, Mr. A. Henderson, Financial Secretary to the War Office, ventured the opinion that Hitlerite Germany "*will be utterly destroyed*" by December. Official and semi-official forecasts of early victory have now replaced the former prognostications of a "long, hard war," the former stock-in-trade of Government propagandists. There could be no greater tribute to the significance of the invasion than this rapid veering round of official opinion.

The Second Front in Europe means the shortening of the war; it opens out the perspective of victory in 1944. This is what distinguishes the Second Front from all other fronts. It is the decisive operation from which there is no escape for the enemy because it signifies that the superior power of the Red Army in the East and of the Anglo-American forces in the West is brought into simultaneous action against the Nazis at the decisive moment and in the right place. Hence the long, drawn-out political fight over the Second Front, marked by the firm determination of the anti - Fascist forces not to brook further delay and the last-ditch struggle of the appeasers to hold off united military action and to do a deal with Fascism. That fight has ended with the rout of the pro-Fascists.

In the first two weeks of the invasion the Allies succeeded in putting ashore nearly half a million men with tanks, big guns, transport and equipment, in sealing off the Cherbourg peninsula, in taking 15,000 prisoners, and in establishing a bridgehead approximately one hundred miles long and twenty miles in depth at the furthermost point of penetration. This is a masterly achievement revealing the ardour of the soldiers, sailors and airmen, the brilliance of the generalship, the faultlessness of the organisation and the overwhelming superiority of the armament. In a remarkably *short space of time* and at the cost of minimum casualties a firm base for large-scale operations against the German forces in France has now been obtained. It is this that constitutes the decisive change in the conduct of the war.

The scale and immediate success of the landing, especially the remarkable deeds of the air-borne troops, exceeded all expectations of the public, partly because the preparations for the operations and the character of them had been necessarily shrouded in mystery and partly because the West Wall propaganda of the Nazis had been permitted to gain somewhat of a hold and had not been sufficiently combated in Britain. It is true that a West Wall of a kind did exist, but not in the fantastic strength portrayed by Dr. Goebbels. There were coastal fortifications and ingenious defence devices which needed courage and resource to deal with. But no static defences, however powerful, are proof against assault unless manned in strength by troops of high calibre.

And it is precisely troops of this calibre in requisite strength that Hitler lacks and has lacked over a long period. Millions of his best troops have already fought their last fight on the eastern plains of Europe and further millions are pinned down by the Red Army in tense expectation of the renewal of the mighty offensive which has so far swept forward from Stalingrad into Rumania to the borders of Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the defenders of the West Wall lacked air support. Compared to its former strength, the Luftwaffe is a crippled

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bird. Its wings have been clipped on the Eastern front and by the deadly persistent attacks maintained by the British and American Air Forces in the West.

If the initial stages of the Second Front had taken the form of an offensive against a big port on the Dieppe model it is possible that Rundstedt, even with his limited air support, would have been able to concentrate sufficient forces against such a single point in order to throw back the attackers. But the resources of the Allies and the understanding of combined operations has advanced considerably since the days of Dieppe. On June 6, 1944, the Anglo-American forces resorted to beach landings on an extended front and brought into use a variety of beach landing craft. The operation was covered by the guns of the Navy and a vast aerial armada of 11,000 planes.

It has been said by some commentators that these beach landings constituted the surprise factor which explains why the Germans were unable to organise a resistance sufficiently powerful to prevent the landing forces from establishing themselves.

While there is no doubt that the day selected and extent of the attack was an important surprise factor, it should be remembered that the Germans are well enough acquainted with the development of military technique and sufficiently informed by means of their own reconnaissance to know that beach landings would be attempted. Moreover, the Seine Bay must have been marked off by them as one of the expected areas of attack.

But what could they do about it, beyond utilising every day's delay in opening the Second Front in order to strengthen their fortifications? But men, not fortifications, are the decisive factor. And sufficient men for the defence of a long coast line against the mighty forces of the Allies were not available.

This has been shown even more clearly in the subsequent development of operations since the successful landings on June 6, followed by the uninterrupted pouring in of further troops. Even the initial success of the landing need not have unduly worried the Germans if they had had sufficient reserves to concentrate against the invaders still desperately struggling to consolidate their positions on a narrow strip of land which leaves little possibility of manoeuvre. But the German commanders have had to content themselves with holding operations. Decisive reserves are not available.

Without question Rundstedt has hesitated to throw in available reserves against the Normandy bridgehead for fear that the Allies would seize this opportunity in order to establish a second bridgehead while the German reserves were thus concentrated. But for the establishment of this second bridgehead the Allies are not compelled to await the further movement of German troops. It may already be in existence by the time these lines appear.

Three further factors may be noted affecting the capacity of the German resistance and the mobility of their reserves, namely: (1) Montgomery's ability to maintain pressure on the enemy at the same time as he consolidates his positions; (2) the intense bombing of German lines of communications against which they are unable to muster sufficient fighter planes in reply; (3) the remarkable guerilla and sabotage operations conducted by the Army of the French Forces of the Interior whose activities were recorded in a special communique issued by Genral Eisenhower's Headquarters on June 17. This historical document constitutes the first recognition by Supreme Headquarters of this

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French Army as an integral part of the Allied forces operating against the German Army. The communique detailed certain of the actions carried out and continued:—

It is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate all of the many effective acts of destruction which have been carried out. However, these multiple and simultaneous cases of sabotage, co-ordinated with the Allied effort, have delayed considerably the movement of German reserves to the combat zone. . . . Guerilla operations against the enemy are in full swing, and in some areas the Army of the French Forces of the Interior is in full control. At the end of the first week of operations on the shores of France the Army of the French Forces of the Interior has, with its British and American comrades, played its assigned role in the battle of liberation.

This recognition of the great part now being played by the French fighters draws pointed attention to another of the decisive weaknesses of the Nazi European Fortress, namely, the valiant and sustained struggle of the oppressed peoples against their enslavers. All France is rising. The organised fighters are supported by the overwhelming mass of the population. From the Allies these patriots must receive arms, munitions and medical supplies on a far larger scale than hitherto.

Side by side with the unfolding of the offensive in the West goes the victorious sweep of Alexander's armies past Rome and into northern Italy, and the opening out of the Red Army offensive, confined at the time of writing to the powerful onslaught against Finland, but likely at any moment to be extended to the Eastern Front as a whole. Working out in practice is the complete agreement reached at Teheran "as to the scope and timing of the operations which will be undertaken from the east, west and south."

The final stages of the Italian campaign stand in brilliant contrast to the earlier blunders and failure to co-ordinate all arms. Cassino, which had remained in enemy hands despite what had been described as the greatest aerial bombardment of the war, quickly fell to the combined assault. The fall of Rome was followed by a headlong German retreat which will probably involve the loss by Kesselring of his 14th and 10th armies, as well as the abandonment of all equipment. Thus the Italian campaign, after many military and political mishaps, has at last been triumphantly vindicated, although well behind schedule.

The situation of the German forces in Italy is no longer dependent on the factors in this sector alone. With the opening of the Second Front the possibility of effective reinforcement is excluded. Hitler's delaying actions in Italy are now coming to an end; he has been beaten by the brilliance of the Allied commanders and his inability to sustain his armies in the field.

In Finland a new page in history is now being written. The Finnish rulers were offered the opportunity of a peaceful exit from the war on terms of great generosity which would have preserved the country's independence and have saved it from further useless destruction, but the Tanner, Mannerheim gang preferred to remain in the service of Hitler. The Red Army has been compelled to return to the attack. The swiftness of the achievement has demonstrated that Soviet generosity towards Finland was not motivated by considerations of Finnish ability to resist. The Soviet Government was anxious to smooth the path to peace and to help the Finnish people to escape from the Nazi grip. Peace could have been achieved months ago, but Finnish hypocrisy

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and treachery has made it necessary for the Red Army to come in order to finish the job.

From the military standpoint the Finnish operations are of considerable significance. The knocking out of the Finns will release Red Army divisions for the assault elsewhere, it will facilitate the operations of the Red Fleet in the Baltic and assist the land operations in the Baltic sector of the Eastern Front. The withdrawal or mopping up of Dietl's divisions in Finland will leave open the northern route into Norway.

From the political standpoint the Finnish operations are bound to yield rich divisions to the United Nations. They will deal a body blow to the Nazi system of satellites and face the quislings of Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria with certain inescapable decisions.

But this settling of accounts with Finland is only a preliminary to the renewal of the major offensive. The strength of the Soviet forces, the favourable opportunities offered by their positions and the added impulse given by the knowledge that the battle has been joined in the West all point to an offensive which in majesty and fury will surpass even the might of the campaign which amazed the entire world this spring.

Not least of the results of the establishment of the Second Front is the defeat suffered by the camp of reaction in Britain and the U.S., the refutation of its military theories and the confusion into which it has been thrown.

It has been the custom of the reactionary propagandists to paint a terrifying picture of the heavy casualties that a landing on the continent would entail. In practice, it has been proved that the co-ordination of all arms, the carrying through of a landing by infantry and air-borne troops with adequate sea and air cover, in no way involves the risk of a massacre. General Bradley, Commander of the American troops in France, has stated that the total American casualties for the first eleven days were 3,283 killed and 12,600 wounded. These may be accurately described as relatively light.

The military significance of the operation has been continually written down by the method of labelling other campaigns as being already a Second Front or by the suggestion that the attack in the West could not influence the course of the war in the same way as attacks elsewhere. Thus the Italian campaign, even though it engaged a limited number of troops, was promoted to the position of Second Front by some newspapers and statesmen while the pending attack in the West was demoted to the position of Third Front. With the landing in Normandy all this confusion disappeared like snow before the midday sun. The terms of Eisenhower's Order of the Day, the magnitude of the attack and the enormous possibilities opened out seized the public imagination and revealed to all why progressive opinion had fought so long and bitterly for the attack in the West as the essential victory operation of the war.

A spate of propaganda had been let loose to prove that victory could be achieved through bombing alone. This theory was more than the treasured pet of certain air marshals; it was echoed in Cabinet circles and taken up by Labour leaders, who hastened to proclaim that the war could be won by metal, not men. How far the influence of this theory was responsible for the indecision in the military policy of the Western Allies through the greater part of 1943 may one day be revealed. It certainly had a long run in Italy. But it

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has now been definitely refuted in theory and practice. The success of the Second Front is the triumph of the co-ordination of all arms.

It is not without interest to note that it is precisely those forces which belittled the Second Front and derided the mass campaign for it who are now most anxious to explain that it has been opened at precisely the right moment and that their earlier expressions of opposition and doubt were due to a desire to prevent premature action.

There is little to be gained at this moment of hard and desperate fighting by a discussion on whether the Second Front should have been opened earlier. The main factor in the situation is that the Second Front now exists and that the full unity in action of the Democratic Coalition has at last been achieved. But it would be a mistake to overlook the fact that for nearly three years a bitter political struggle over the Second Front has been waged in Britain and America and that its final achievement represents a great triumph for people and is a tribute to their political and military sagacity, anti-Fascist spirit and tenacity of purpose.

The politicians and newspapers who make a virtue out of the long delay should be reminded that "full understanding . . . with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942" was first reached in June of that year and that glorious achievements of the Red Army in 1942 and 1943 could not be consolidated and turned into a decisive rout of the Germans because the absence of a front in the West enabled Hitler to throw in fresh reserves. Let it not be forgotten that following the Stalingrad victory, which marked the turning-point of the world war, that the advance of the Red Army in the winter of 1942-43 was halted by the Germans and Kharkov recaptured only because Hitler was able to transfer thirty divisions from the West to the East.

Even in these days of Britain's greatest glory, when we are honourably fulfilling our obligations to our comrades in arms, we should pause to remember that the years of preparation during which we trained our men, perfected our weapons and overcome the U-boats were made possible by the heroic sacrifice and unswerving solidarity of the Soviet people, millions of whom have fallen in the common cause.

The Second Front today has a new meaning to what it had when Stalin first called for the attack in the West powerful enough to draw off sixty German divisions, and thus relieve the pressure on the Red Army, or when the Casablanca Conference, in January, 1943, made promises to draw the enemy and enemy's air force from the Russian Front.

On the basis of the world victories of the Red Army and of the colossal might built up by Britain and America the Second Front has now become a question of completely crushing the enemy in the course of months, of marching forward to the achievement of the world family of democratic nations envisaged in the decisions of the Teheran Conference. It is not an easy road. The hardest fighting has yet to come and the final defeat of the Germans on their own soil will require a colossal effort. There will be no automatic collapse of the German rear as in 1918.

And in this victory round of the struggle the people of all countries can take great pride in their achievement. The Second Front exists because the people fought for it, because they imparted to Churchill and Roosevelt their own passionate belief in victory and determination to fight to the end.

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Algiers and the Liberation of France

by CLEMENS DUTT

Algiers, June 15.
(*by cable*)

THE Second Front has opened the way to the liberation of France. All the years of preparatory work of struggle and sacrifice have now come to fruition and their worth has been tested in the solution of concrete problems arising on the soil of France itself.

What has been the contribution of Algiers as the temporary capital of France towards the solution of these problems? An estimate of this contribution must be made above all from the viewpoint of the assistance furnished to the various forces engaged in the tasks of liberation and to the co-operation between them.

National Liberation cannot be introduced ready-made by the allied armies. The final word rests with the initiative of the French people itself. Hence three main forces must be taken into account: firstly, the allied armies; secondly, the active struggle of the French people; and thirdly, Overseas France with its Provisional Government.

Each of these has played its part. Above all, with the near approach of Zero Hour the need became increasingly urgent for concerted plans and methods of co-operation between them. Defects in this co-operation, due to contradiction between and within the forces involved, now stand sharply revealed in the testing time of liberation itself. Nevertheless, the progress achieved during the last six months must not be overlooked.

Algiers War Effort

First importance naturally attaches to the overseas contribution, to the allied war effort and the progress of the French armed forces. Space here only allows for a few general conclusions.

Under the leadership of the National Committee of Liberation all the resources of the French Empire have been increasingly directed to French war needs. General De Gaulle last March spoke of 14 per cent. of the African population being mobilised; and the Commissioner for War later made mention of 16 per cent., a figure much greater than in the last war.

The French army consists of a number of diverse elements, namely, Free French forces, old soldiers of the Vichy army who have escaped from France, and newly mobilised men and women. The task of recent months has been to carry through a purge of the Fascist leaders and to cement all the diverse elements into a single national army. This has not as yet been fully accomplished, especially as regards the French Navy, but considerable progress has been achieved.

The French armed forces have been largely equipped and armed with allied material. Actual war production has not been raised to the highest possible level. The recent setting up of Joint Production Committees in aviation workshops by Fernand Grenier, the Commissioner for Air, has shown one way towards increasing output.

The heritage of the Vichy and reactionary influences referred to below have made it more difficult to enlist the enthusiastic effort of the Algerian population for the war. Algiers, like colonial countries generally, is under the thumb of a colonial bourgeoisie which takes its lead from the mother country. Chief factor in raising pressure for a real war programme and for stimulation of the war effort has been the organised working-class and particularly the Communist Party.

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This applies also to Tunisia and Morocco.

Acting through their Communist Party, through Trade Unions and mass organisation like "France Combattant," the Communists have led the struggle to combat apathy, expose treachery and sabotage, stimulate a war spirit and press for concrete measures for the intensification of the war effort. The Communists have been foremost also in voicing the needs of, and cementing unity with, the Moslem population—amounting to over three-quarters of the whole population.

These efforts, plus the prospects of allied victory, have greatly improved the political climate of Algiers. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the population is still apathetic and reactionary forces still exert considerable influence. It will only be possible to judge the results of the work that has been achieved with the further evolution of the French Empire as a whole.

Aid to the Resistance Movement.

The second most important feature in the progress of this year has been the help for the French internal struggle against the Nazi and Vichy enslavement. The major political development in France since Vichy has been the growth of active resistance and its evolution to the stage of armed struggle.

During the past half-year there has been a rapid advance in the achievement of unity of all French resistance forces, which are now effectively united under the National Council of Resistance. This body has finally adopted the policy of armed struggle as the basis of its action. Further cohesion has been gained by the consolidation of the combat forces in France as a military organisation, the F.F.I. (French Forces of the Interior) in alignment with the rest of the French armed forces. This advance was made with the agreement of the National Committee of Liberation in Algiers.

The progress of events more than ever confirms the declaration by the Central Committee of the French Communist Party last October:—

We were right in affirming that there would be no liberation of France without the participation of the French people in armed struggle against the invader and that it was necessary to answer the Hitlerite terror and violence not only by union but also by arms.

Those elements in Algiers, as in France and elsewhere, who were afraid of the initiative of the people themselves and who hesitated to subscribe to De Gaulle's declaration "National liberation cannot be achieved without a national insurrection" naturally sought to limit and to minimise the role of the patriot forces. Hence the progressive elements in Algiers had to wage important struggle for the supply of arms to French patriots, for unity and military organisation of the patriot forces and against the policy of passive waiting. This struggle was never fully won, but there was a marked change in attitude since last year. Despite obstacles, outside help was increased from a trickle to a steady stream and closer unity with the patriot forces was achieved. Even now, however, the help given can be characterised by the words "too little and too late."

The Consultative Assembly

The contribution of Algiers to the liberation of France depends primarily on its role as a temporary capital and seat of the Provisional Government. A special barometer of political progress and feeling has been provided by the provisional parliament called the Consultative Assembly which held its intial session last November.

Its characteristic feature is that a substantial proportion of its membership consists of Resistance delegates out of France who first made their

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voice heard in this assembly. Above all, they were instrumental in securing that the organised resistance movement in France was the paramount expression of the French popular will and the chief authority for the actions of the Provisional Government.

During the last six months the Consultative Assembly has had both an upward and a downward curve. Its first session last year was little more than a formal declaration of French aspirations. During the January and March sessions of this year the Assembly showed itself to be a real force and not a mere debating society or an impotent appendage of the National Committee of Liberation. It expressed the demands of the French people engaged in struggle and in a series of unanimous resolutions it formulated the basic needs of a war programme covering a wide field.

Doubts have been expressed as to the representative character of the Consultative Assembly. It is true that the French popular forces are inadequately represented in it, since it contains few workers and Communists, no delegates of the National Front franc-tireurs and partisans, and perhaps an excessive number of former senators and parliamentarians who owe their seats to almost fortuitous circumstances. Nevertheless, it has brought out the spirit of the French struggle, exerted pressure upon the National Committee of Liberation, called Commissioners to account and checked their actions.

During the last session, however, a certain loss of the pristine vigour was noticeable. Although adopting important positive resolutions, for instance, on organisation of partisan forces and help for them and on the need of a united national army, the session was lacking in the earlier intensity and force. An impression was created that many members feel the lack of contact with France and that their political role in North Africa is not important. There has been a certain crystallisation of Right Wing elements and growth of division and internal manoeuvring between the different resistance groups. The effectiveness of the Assembly debates has also been reduced because several outstanding members are withdrawn by their entry into the Government without an equivalent reinforcement by new delegates from France.

To sum up: the Consultative Assembly suffers from various imperfections and is not a popularly elected body, but it has played an important role and will still be needed until free elections are possible in France. Its mandate cannot persist in France, where it will have to be replaced or greatly reinvigorated by new elements.

The Provisional Government of the French Republic

Since its formation a year ago the National Committee of Liberation has undergone a process of evolution coming closer to the people of France and gradually earning the right of the title of Provisional Government of the French Republic. Its authority and prestige as a government has depended on its representing and leading the union of all French people in action for the liberation. This authority and prestige has grown in proportion as it has succeeded in realising the policy demanded by the united resistance movement in France.

The historic advance in development of the National Committee of Liberation as a government of genuine national union was the entry of the French Communist Party representatives on April 4 of this year. This step itself was the result of an overwhelming demand from France which had been sabotaged by reactionary forces, but eventually could not be further delayed.

The National Liberation Committee's sensitiveness to the demands

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of the resistance movement in France is evident also from a series of recent measures. One example is increased efforts to obtain arms and aid for the French patriots. Another is the final official incorporation of units engaged in the struggle in France as an integral part of the French armed forces. The trial and execution of Pucheu, despite criticism and pressure from outside influences marked an important stage in the fulfilment of the popular will. Other notorious traitors are still not brought to trial, but the rupture with the Vichy arch-criminals is now final.

Another typical example where French popular feeling has obtained a response is seen in the ordinance adopted on the restoration of the French press prescribing stringent measures to prevent corruption by money power or by foreign influences. The original proposals have been considerably modified to follow closely the demands of the French resistance movement that the *underground press* shall be taken as the basis for the press after the liberation. The acceptance of the plan proposed by the Consultative Assembly for the restoration of democratic institutions in France, despite the Government having itself drafted a plan of a more conservative character, is also notable.

The French National Committee of Liberation under the leadership of De Gaulle has demonstrated its desire as a whole to work with the popular movement for the liberation and for a democratic France and the right of the people to choose their own institutions. The French National Committee of Liberation has shown itself more representative of the popular will than many so-called Governments of occupied countries which enjoy a less valid title to power and a much greater measure of Allied recognition. Finally it should be noted that it was by the desire of the popular movement in France transmitted through the Consultative Assembly that the National Committee of Liberation adopted the title of Provisional Government of the French Republic.

The sole important step taken which has aroused misgivings, namely, the removal of General Giraud as Commander-in-Chief, is precisely the one that was not demanded by the combined Resistance organisations. This step had political justification in view of past attempts from outside to use Giraud as a counterpoise to De Gaulle; but the French people have historical reasons for distrusting any attempt to concentrate military and political power in the hands of one man.

Despite all that has been said above, the Provisional Government remains a makeshift with its definitely provisional title. Firstly, it has been repeatedly pointed out that it is not yet a full government of national union, and cannot be that so long as important sections of the resistance movement, such as the Confederation General du Travail, franc-tireurs and partisans, and the united youth movement, are not represented in it. Further, not only is the Communist representation underweighted relatively to the role of the Party in France, but many existing Commissioners cannot be said to have popular backing and largely owe their position to a previous connection with financial or industrial interests.

De Gaulle himself is not a mere symbol or figure-head. He is the acknowledged leader of the French war effort. He has been criticised for a tendency to take decisions without consultation and for choosing assistants who have a reactionary past. But the real ground of foreign criticisms is not that he is a dictator, but that he is too independent of foreign influence and that he is too revolutionary, having shown breadth of vision enough to rally a front of all elements, including the Communists.

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The plain facts and the policy and actions of the Provisional Government under his direction explain why 95 per cent. of Frenchmen accept him and his Government as leader of National Unity in the struggle for liberation.

That acceptance is less marked in Algeria itself. The National Committee of Liberation here received a legacy of political and racial persecution, traitors in high places, and power in the hands of the representatives of trusts and feudal proprietors who had enriched themselves by trade with Nazi Germany. Precisely the progressive character of the National Liberation Committee's policy, such as recent examples of social legislation and steps to improve the rights and the position of the Arab population, enraged the reactionary forces which recently came into the open with an offensive campaign to discredit the Provisional Government and the Assembly.

It is widely felt that the Provisional Government still shows too much gentleness in dealing with reactionaries. There are too many agents of trusts and of the fifth column working behind the scenes, too many Vichyists at large while patriotic anti-Fascists like the French Communist Party leader Maurice Thorez are not permitted to come to Algiers.

International Consequences of Algiers Policy

The main lesson of the North African experience is that of a warning for France and for the Allies. North Africa experienced a liberation which came almost wholly from without. Instead of a popular uprising, the liberation was internally helped by a conspiracy of a small group of patriots who found themselves punished for their pains. Instead of a clear distinction being made between Fascists and anti-Fascists, the former were kept in office and the latter were kept in prison. France will not tolerate any repetition of the North African experience.

Yet right up to the time of the Second Front the relations of France with the Allies have been poisoned by the suspicion that precisely some such repetition is intended. During the last six months there has been a continual seething commotion over these foreign relations. It is like a perpetually boiling cauldron which, when the lid is lifted from time to time, gives off a slightly different smell, but in which the unsavoury ingredients remain the same; namely, the refusal to recognise the French Provisional Government, the refusal to arrange sovereignty and independence of the French people during the liberation, the fear of the possibility of the French people carrying through a national insurrection.

For a long time the French leaders have been haunted by the possibility of an allied compromise with Vichy on the pretext of military expediency. Denials have cleared the air, but even now loopholes are left for some combination with ostensibly non-Vichy elements.

The United States of America and Britain refuse to follow the simple course of according full recognition and provisional rights of De Gaulle's Government in France during the interim period. Its writ runs in Africa, but not in France, although it is the leader of the French patriot forces and custodian in practice of French interests. The reason given for the refusal of recognition is that this would impose a government on France which would thus be deprived of its free choice. This is indeed killing by kindness. In order to preserve the French people's right to a free choice, they are subjected in effect to a species of AMGOT under the final supervision of the American Commander-in-Chief.

Some of the worst immediate consequences of the existing policy will un-

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doubtedly be overcome in practice as a result of hand-to-mouth arrangements. Fomentation of civil war from a concern to prevent civil war may be avoided. But a disastrous outcome is not to be prevented unless the French people as a whole cease to be thwarted in achieving their own liberation, punishing traitors, and freely deciding their own destiny.

There is a profound feeling of friendship between the French and British peoples. French resistance patriots testify unanimously to the admiration and affection for the British people amongst the mass of the people in France. It would be an international disaster if this friendship were endangered or dissipated through British policy being determined by reactionary considerations.

French Republican democracy, deeply rooted among the mass of the people in France, will triumph through popular initiative in a national uprising and in far-reaching social change. Only so can France be restored to prosperity and greatness and become a powerful partner in the family of democratic nations. We must oppose and prevent any reactionary attempts which could endanger this future and estrange a valuable ally of the British people.

Full Employment

by J. R. CAMPBELL

THE British Government White Paper on Employment provides an interesting commentary on the innumerable speeches in favour of private enterprise and the early lifting of controls which were delivered by chairmen of boards of directors at this year's shareholders' meetings.

For the White Paper, issued by a Government in which the Tories are predominant, makes it quite clear:—

That uncontrolled private enterprise cannot arrange the transition from war-time to peace-time conditions. Without State control there is no guarantee that the production of essential goods get priority over the production of luxuries, that the most essential measures of industrial re-equipment are given first preference, that the most vital export markets are not neglected in favour of the more immediate home ones.

That the problem of the special areas cannot be solved by private enterprise. To rescue those areas from the economic stagnation of pre-war years the State must pledge itself to give special assistance to the basic industries of coal, steel, engineering and shipbuilding, to control the location of industry and to give financial inducements to new firms to settle in these areas.

That it is impossible to maintain a "high and stable level of employment after the war" unless the Government puts itself in a position to intervene and influence the workings of the capitalist system.

Thus in its first essay on how to maintain employment a Government with predominant Tory influence has to admit that economic crises throwing masses of people workless are not due to mysterious world economic blizzards but to the quite definite operations of the normal mechanism of capitalist society.

"In the majority of highly industrialised countries" the White Paper admits, "it is expenditure on private investment which is the most usual and most potent cause of instability in total expenditure and consequently in employment."

Short of a socialist-planned economy where production, wages, capital expansion and social services are centrally planned there are theoretically two ways in which a high and stable level of employment might be maintained.

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The first would be for the State to have a positive plan for achieving full employment, increased production and a rising standard of life and to arm itself with the necessary controls to achieve these purposes. This policy might be compared for purposes of illustration to that of an individual who sought to maintain a high standard of health by paying constant attention to his environment, food, exercise and general habits.

The alternative to this would appear to be a policy for combating mass unemployment whenever it threatens and to be ready to apply the appropriate remedies without delay. To resume our analogy, this is rather like a man who takes no especial care of his health, except to take his temperature every morning and to hastily call in the doctor to apply his remedies when things seem to be going wrong.

Indeed, one of the central proposals of the Government is the establishment of a small central staff which will regularly take the temperature of the economic system or as the White Paper describes it, "measure and analyse economic trends."

An appropriate remedy will be at hand in the form of five years' plans of public capital expenditure which have been drawn up by the local authorities. These plans will cover "better housing, public buildings, means of communication, power and water supplies."

As soon as a trade depression shows signs of starting, the local authorities will commence or accelerate these plans. This will give rise to more employment on the spot and in the capital goods industries which provide the materials for the various work-schemes.

The aim is to guarantee that as private investment slackens off, public investment will increase and the total expenditure of the people on goods and services will be kept at a higher level than would otherwise be the case.

Such is the policy of the Government. It cannot reasonably be disputed that if this increased expenditure were on a sufficient scale, and if it were spread over a sufficient range of industries and services it would do much to offset a developing depression.

No indication is given of the rate of expenditure that the Government believes will be necessary. But the White Paper rejects the policy of continuing public expenditure up to the point that jobs will be created for everyone. For the Government, says the White Paper, " will have equally in mind the need to maintain the national income and the need for a policy of budgetary equilibrium." With its mind on the need for balancing the budget over a period of years, the Government may well stop expenditure before a condition of full employment has been reached.

Nor is the type of public expenditure suggested on a sufficiently wide basis. The White Paper quite correctly points out that expenditure on houses, schools and hospitals "cannot readily be postponed to serve purposes of employment policy." There may, of course, be some acceleration of house-building, etc., but if a great deal of housing and school-building will be going on all the time the amount of public works to be set in motion when a crisis threatens will be correspondingly diminished.

So much is said in various parts of the White Paper on increasing industrial efficiency that it is surprising that practically nothing is said on the need for *accelerating* the re-equipment and modernisation of British industries when a slump threatens. Is this because such a policy would best be carried out on the basis of public ownership of certain basic industries

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and some public control over the investment policy of large businesses?

The White Paper also proposes to increase consumers' incomes by reducing social service contributions when depression threatens. This would mean an additional expenditure of £100 million per annum (or between £70 million and £80 million on home-produced goods) when unemployment reaches 12 per cent. or something in the neighbourhood of two millions.

The extent of this figure may be judged by the following facts. In the last economic crisis wages, salaries, profit and interest were in 1933 £451 million less than in 1930. The figure of £100 million extra expenditure should also be compared with the fact that personal expenditure on consumption at current prices in 1943 was £4,098 million after indirect taxation had been deducted.

Clearly the Government expenditure in aid of consumers only operates after a high level of unemployment has been reached, and is quite insufficient for the purpose it seeks to accomplish.

The reasons for the deficiencies in the Government policy is clear. A more ambitious policy of investment expenditure would involve some increase of public ownership and some control over private investment. (The latter proposal is perfectly practicable. It is being operated in wartime and the Government proposes to continue it, but only for the transition period.)

In short, the Government is shying away from a positive plan to create and maintain full employment because such a plan involves encroachments on the ownership and control of capitalist industry.

Full employment—a job for everyone, as distinct from ironing out the booms and slumps of capitalism—requires a positive policy of planning. This involves, as a minimum:—

1. The planning of a minimum standard of life for all citizens as first priority.
2. Control of all major investment expenditure (public and private) through a national investment board or similar central organ. Public ownership of banks and control of insurance companies, building societies and other investment institutions.
3. Extension of national ownership to coal and fuel, steel and transport industries.
4. The redistribution of national income by higher wages, increased social services and redistributive taxation.
5. An overall State control of the economy.

These are some of the elements of the Communist Party's proposals for post-war policy contained in its extensive document, *Britain for the People*. The deficiencies in the Government policy show up clearly the need for a positive approach if jobs for all are to be provided.

Writing in the Soviet Review, *War and the Working Class*, V. Gayev points out in relation to the "employment" plans now being discussed in Britain and America:

The weak point in the proposals for the curtailment of unemployment consists in the following: a big industrial country is closely connected with the world market. If a crisis breaks out in some industrial country, as, for example, the U.S.A., it inevitably spreads to other countries. Therefore measures for the "full utilisation" of labour power should have been undertaken on a scale transgressing the boundaries of individual countries. There is no need to explain the difficulties involved. Although the British plans for "full employment" stress the importance of foreign trade, nevertheless, in reality they take into attention only the possibilities of the expansion of the home market.

The plans advanced in the U.S.A., on the contrary, provide concrete measures in the sphere of foreign trade. In August, 1943, the American Treasury published an extensive plan providing for, firstly, the creation of companies for the purchase of such surpluses of raw materials

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and food, which could exert pressure on the world market, secondly, for control over an extension of world-production of raw materials; and thirdly, for the creation of an international bank for the restoration and extension of production, in the post-war period. If it is remembered that the problem of markets for the U.S.A. is largely sharpened in connection with the tremendous growth of the productive forces in that country during the war, it will be clear why all American plans for post-war production give priority to the possibilities of the utilisation of foreign markets.

Clearly any attempts to operate domestic measures for the achievement of full employment must be supported by measures aiming at an expanding home market. This involves, above all, co-operation between Great Britain and the United States of America. The success of the Teheran policy of "banishing the scourge of war for generations" is dependent on the whole-hearted co-operation of Britain and the United States in all spheres. An outbreak of sharp struggles for markets between the two main capitalist countries in the United Nations could make more difficult, if it did not completely undermine, the political co-operation that is necessary if a system of world security is to be built.

The aim of international economic co-operation cannot be confined to restoring the pre-war situation, For world economic relations were in a state of chronic crisis between the wars, particularly after the great depression of 1929-33.

It is necessary, in such co-operation, to aim at two things which are complementary. The first is to take quite deliberate domestic measures to reach a state of full employment in the leading countries of the world; the other is to remove all barriers to international trade and investment. The prosperity of the world market is dependent on the prosperity of the individual countries which compose it. If the United States, or Britain, or a number of leading European countries, refrain from taking steps to increase internal prosperity, then it is useless to talk about an extension of international economic co-operation.

Bearing this in mind, we pass to examine the proposals which are now under discussion with a view to expanding world trade. High on the list comes the International Monetary Fund drawn up by the experts of forty-one nations, around which a conference of Governments is shortly to be called.

The Monetary Fund assumes that countries stricken by the war will have received emergency relief through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and that if they require to reconstruct their industry on a large scale they will be able to obtain foreign loans to enable them to do so from some other source. It is, therefore, concerned mainly with providing them with financial resources to enable them to commence ordinary trading or current accounts to keep it up once they have started. So it aims by various devices which we need not describe here (1) to provide them with sufficient credit resources to start with and (2) if their trade gets out of balance (i.e., if they are buying more than they are selling) to give them time to adjust the balance without a sudden cutting down of the imports or other similar devices. Thus a country's trade may be out of balance because it is importing more than it exports. But its imports may be raw materials which it will ultimately turn into export goods and so adjust the balance. The plan aims to give it time to do so.

A British criticism of the plan is that the credit facilities which the plan provides are on too niggardly a scale to permit this to be done by a country that is having serious difficulties with its trade in the initial post-war years. This is obviously a matter for serious

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discussion. But to suggest, as some British critics are doing, that we should recognise that an International Monetary Fund is impossible and should therefore fall back and try to build up a trading bloc composed of Britain, its colonial empire, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Eire with whatever Western European countries may join is desperate economic defeatism. Apart from the fact that the building of such a bloc would encounter enormous difficulties, it amounts to a declaration of economic war on the United States, calmly proposed as if the need for the post-war political co-operation of the United Nations had never been heard of. The British economic isolationists had better be careful lest they wreck the peace by strengthening the hands of the political isolationists in the U.S.A.

Another argument is that the United States cannot, because of its political set-up, play the game in a way which will enable the International Fund to work. It will refuse to accept imports in exchange for exports in sufficient quantities, with the result that European countries will be forced out of the fund, as they were forced off the gold standard, and the old restrictive trade practices will be resumed once more.

That there will be a difficulty in getting the United States to balance imports and exports in the immediate post-war years is certain. But it is not necessary to the working of the fund that it shall do so. The same immediate results can be obtained if it embarks on a policy of long-term international lending. The effect of this lending will be to expand world trade and make it easier for all countries to sell increased quantities of goods abroad. This was the suggestion that Earl Browder made in his recent speech to American Communists. It is a similar idea that is behind the proposal for an International Investment Bank.

Something depends on the manner in which the loans are made. At best they might be made through the Investment Bank or similar international investment institutions to which all nations would contribute, the United States predominantly so. Such loans would not be tied, i.e., the country receiving them for purposes of industrial development would be at liberty to spend them in placing orders where it was most profitable to do so. Alternatively, attempts might be made to direct their spending to highly-industrialised countries, where unemployment was greatest. At the worst, the United States might want to make tied loans, insisting that any orders for equipment that was necessary should be placed in the United States.

It is no use expecting the United States to act as an international Santa Claus, or to insist that its view of enlightened self-interest should coincide with our own.

In the real world its lending will probably embrace a number of forms. Some will be done through appropriate international investment institutions, some direct to foreign governments, some through joint corporations representing governments, say a French-American investment corporation, some by setting up factories inside a country, with 50 per cent. American control. But the effect, if sufficiently extensive, will be that world-trade will increase and countries like Britain will steadily get back on a creditor basis and be able to play an increasing part in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union and of devastated Europe and in developing the backward countries of the world.

If the idea of international investment (partly public and partly private) is repugnant to some people because of the role that America will play, let them remember that the alternative is a return to economic nationalism more desperate than before the war,

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delay in the reconstruction of devastated Europe, vicious quarrels between the victors and a Fascist come-back. It is, therefore, in the interest of every peace-loving country, particularly the new People's Governments, which will emerge in Europe, that international currency and investment policies should be agreed upon.

Such policies will involve concessions on the part of the British ruling class. It will be impossible directly or by subtle administrative means to exclude the international investment institutions from India and the British Crown Colonies. Indeed, it would be against the interests of Britain to do so, because the speedy development of those regions, which cannot be done by Britain alone, will increase world trade, expand British exports and enable us to get all the food and raw materials we need to ensure a rising standard of life. The peoples of the colonies must be associated with these efforts. India, in particular, must be given the right to set up a representative National Government which will be in a position to protect the rights of the people of India in all such transactions.

If world-trade can be expanded by such means, then international agreements as to the division of trade, as suggested by Earl Browder, become feasible.

Questions other than currency and investment, such as the stabilisation of the prices of essential commodities, also await international agreement.

They will only be solved if the progressive forces within each country realise the fundamental importance of underpinning the victory of the United Nations by the most extensive political and economic agreements.

The Co-operative Century

by T. VERNON

THE Centenary of the British Consumers' Co-operative Movement could not have fallen more appropriately than in this historic and momentous year of 1944—a year when the great issue of freedom or slavery for mankind is being decided. The certain victory of the united world forces fighting on behalf of liberty will open an epoch of opportunity and constructive work wherein the Co-operative movement will advance to new levels of service to the people. Its second century will be a glorious successor to its first.

Prior to the formation in 1844 of The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, and the opening of its first shop in the Toad Lane warehouse on a tiny capital of £28, there had been already a large number of co-operative enterprises seeking to apply the teachings of Robert Owen. A few years before Rochdale there were as many as 500 such societies, with annual congresses of what seemed a successful movement. For a variety of reasons this earlier consumers' co-operative movement collapsed and nearly all the societies petered out.

The Rochdale Pioneers were familiar with these earlier attempts—some, indeed, had participated in them—and learned useful lessons from their failure and in the light of them introduced specific new principles in drawing up their Rules. These, the famous Rochdale Principles, became a general and permanent feature of subsequent consumer co-operation. Because of that, and of the great unbroken development onwards from 1844, today's British Co-operative movement is regarded as stemming from that first little shop in Rochdale. The Rochdale enterprise and its me-

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thods have been the prototype for world-wide developments in consumer co-operation.

Three new ideas in organising consumers' co-operation were contributed by the Rochdale Pioneers, viz.:—

(*a*) Distribution of trading surplus as a dividend on purchases;
(*b*) Making membership non-dependent upon adhesion to a particular social ideal;
(*c*) Democratic control by the full membership

together with a rigid rule forbidding sales on credit—one of the big lessons learned from the early failures. These three new ideas have been of equal importance as primary reasons for the spectacular success of the movement launched from Rochdale.

Within six years the original 28 members had grown to 600 and the capital of £28 to £2,289. In its first twenty-five years, the Rochdale Society developed trade in grocery, drapery, tailoring, footwear, butchery, coal. They opened a tobacco factory and established a co-operative corn-mill, a sick and burial society and a co-operative building society. They assisted the formation of many other societies by their example and advice, not only in Britain but throughout the world. Some of the original twenty-eight Pioneers helped to form the Co-operative Wholesale Society, that vast trading organisation which has played so vital a part in the progress of the movement.

By 1862 the Consumers' Co-operative Societies had a combined membership of 100,000, with an annual trade of £3,000,000. By 1894, fifty years after the modest start in Rochdale, there were 1,421 societies with an annual trade over £32,000,000 and a membership of nearly 1¼ millions. By 1919, twenty-five years later, trade was nearly £200,000,000 and membership over 4 millions. In those twenty-five years membership had more than trebled and trade multiplied six-fold.

By 1944, the completion of the first century, membership has now grown to the tremendous figure of 9 millions. Taking into account the members of co-operators' households, the total number of men, women and children associated with the Co-operative movement must be at least 20 millions.

Annual retail trade is now in the neighbourhood of £350 millions, i.e., about 10 per cent. of the country's total retail trade. The movement has not yet extended its operations in clothing and furniture to the same scale as foodstuffs, always its principal province. So the best measurement of co-operative achievement is its distribution of those commodities upon which it has principally concentrated.

The Co-ops are feeding about one-quarter of the population with the main rationed commodities (sugar, fats, cheese, bacon, etc.). One-third of the country's milk supplies are distributed by the Co-ops. One-quarter of its daily bread is baked by the Co-ops.

These figures alone reveal the size of today's Co-operative movement in Britain and its vital role in maintaining the life of the nation. They show us, too, what potentialities of growth there are in connection with commodities (e.g., clothing and furniture) not yet attempted to be handled on the same scale as foodstuffs.

All statistical figures about the movement are big ones. We will quote merely a few. Total share capital is £204 millions. Investments *outside* of the movement (Government and municipal stocks, etc.) are over £200 millions. The trading turnover of the wholesale societies is £202 millions. The turnover of the Co-operative Bank is over £1,000 millions. The wholesale value of manufactured and processed goods supplied by the English and Scottish Wholesale Societies to the retail societies in 1943

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was over £62 millions. The Co-operative Insurance Society had a premium income in 1943 of nearly £12 millions. The total number of employees in 1943 was over one-third million (the movement is second only to the State as a large-scale employer). In 1943 2¼ million houses or other premises were registered with Co-operative Societies for coal supplies and the tonnage sold was over 5½ millions. And so we could continue.

This tremendous working-class trading organisation commenced but one hundred years ago with just £28. The enterprise, efficient management, dogged persistence and all-round ability that have gone to build the vast structure we see today confirm once more the executive and organising power of the working-class. With a perspective of the workers taking a leading role in the life of the nation, the significance of the Co-operators' achievement needs no emphasis.

Even in the earliest stages the need was seen for a wholesaling organisation able to combat the exploitation practised by private trade upon struggling retail societies. The Co-operative Wholesale Society (formed in 1864) is a federation of the retail societies (which provide its share capital and elect its directors) and distributes its surplus amongst them on the basis of trade done. Only eight years after the C.W.S. was formed, the Societies empowered it to undertake manufacture and it commenced with biscuits, sweets, boots and shoes.

At that time it was unheard of that a retailing organisation should undertake the manufacture of its own supplies. But this bold experiment proved a great success. In ten years its productions were over £170,000 per annum; in twenty years £967,000. Thence onwards the volume leapt ahead. In 1915 it was over £12 millions: in 1935, £32 millions; and in 1943 nearly £50 millions.

Although the Co-operatives are still far from realising all their potentialities in the kinds of commodities distributed, and manufactured, it soon became clear to the leaders of the movement that in certain fields, e.g., the extractive industries, iron and steel, engineering, the entry would not be feasible: and hence the bulk of the materials in manufacturing are derived from capitalist sources.

With the experiences of the war of 1914-8 and the special taxes imposed on the co-operative societies, the movement was compelled to change its traditional attitude towards overt participation in politics. It began to embark on a parallel line of development based on the idea of working-class unity and political action. As a member of the National Council of Labour, the Co-operative Union is now an equal partner with the Trade Unions and the Labour Party in the handling of the common problems of the mass working-class organisations. The Co-operative Party (with an affiliated membership of some seven millions) has clear and definite policies on all national issues and has put forward a far-reaching post-war programme covering international affairs and primary social and economic questions.

There are today a number of problems before the movement. These arise both from external conditions and also from causes connected with its own growth and intended expansion.

Its biggest problem connects with the spread and influence of monopolies and the fierce competition of combine multiple shops. On the whole, and thanks to its greater strength, it has fared better in this war than the last in respect of commodity and other controls, though not without a struggle. Before the war disabilities were created for the Co-operatives by Tory legislation, e.g., levying of

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income tax on undistributed trading surpluses (1933) and applying the National Defence Contribution tax (1939). Marketing boards and import restrictions (e.g., bacon from Denmark) worked contrary to Co-operative interests and chances of development.

Connected with the growth of monopolies there has been recently an increasing propaganda directed against the Co-operative movement. The *Daily Express* group of newspapers, owned by millionaire Lord Beaverbrook has carried on a continuous campaign, in which the small shops and small businesses have been told that the Co-ops are the enemy against whom they should combine. Actually it would be to the better interest of the small businesses to find a way of combining with the Co-ops against the strangle-hold of the trusts. This will, of course, require a corresponding policy on the part of the co-operative movement to facilitate such collaboration.

Another problem is in connection with State control of certain commodities and shop licensing. Whilst these controls are unduly influenced by the monopolists, the Co-operatives are at a disadvantage. With the vested interests eliminated, and proper regard paid to the position and needs of the Co-operatives, such controls are necessary for the movement's requirements.

Bread-baking illustrates many of today's main problems for the Co-ops. Capitalist bakery amalgamations, with great financial resources, have been developing since before the war and plans are afoot for highly-mechanised large-scale bakeries able to support a price-war designed to knock out of business a large number of the smaller units. Bread-baking is an important part of the Retail Societies' production and distribution — and therefore is on a local and rather limited scale. The idea of regional bakeries, matching in scale and efficiency the newer capitalist type, is now being threshed out. The problem is not an easy one. Should the big regional bakeries be financed and managed by a joint society set up by all the retail societies in each particular region? Will every society in a region "play"? Will the customers continue their support? Where will the existing bakeries of the purely Productive Societies fit into a retail societies' joint scheme? Must the C.W.S. help—with finance, planning, administration? Should outlets be created through private shops if co-operative trade cannot absorb the full economic output of a large modern bakery?

Problems of this type raise in sharper form than ever before the classic question of whether or not to federate in a close-knit organisation the movement's hundreds of separate, self-governing societies and thereby securing centralised leadership and all-round conformity with national decisions.

That question is forced to the front again when the planning of a great development by the C.W.S. on the productive side is under discussion. Can it safely embark on large schemes, involving considerable finance, until the buying departments of the Retail Societies are co-ordinated with the productive machine and 100 per cent. absorption of the factories' output guaranteed? And then a further question comes up. What part should the C.W.S. play in developing new outlets for its products, in the "co-operative deserts" and where societies are weak or unenterprising? And if not the C.W.S., then who?

All its problems of an internal kind the movement will solve. The present controversies around different solutions put forward are a healthy sign of determination to do so. All those problems arising from capitalist de-

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velopments and conditions, i.e., from monopoly, present more difficulty and will be solved by a variety of means, but falling into two clear groupings. First, the strengthening of the Co-operatives. Second, strengthening of the working-class and wide progressive movement arrayed against monopoly to restrain, and eventually eliminate, it along with the whole of the capitalist system itself.

The Co-operatives have, of course, far more ways of gaining greater strength than can be dealt with here. In summary, they are:—

1. Big-scale development on dry goods side; increase in number of selling points (local stores, departmental stores, speciality shops, bazaar stores) and establishment of a national mail order society.

2. Entry into new fields, e.g., book and periodical publishing, communal feeding and chain restaurants, workers' hotels and holiday camps and everything else possible now, and henceforth, forming part of working-class expenditure under improving conditions.

3. Expansion on productive side by (*a*) new factories; (*b*) establishing permanent links with small manufacturers who are otherwise threatened with extinction by monopoly. Creation of co-operative marketing arrangements for farm produce, fruit and vegetables, and fish.

4. Increased co-op purchases by existing membership and gaining new members.

5. Practical alliance of Co-operatives with small shopkeepers against combine multiples, the common enemy of both.

6. Revival of rank-and-file interest and democratic participation, by overhauling a mechanism now inadequate in today's huge retail societies.

The strengthening of the common fight against monopoly capitalism can be powerfully aided by the Co-operatives and, indeed, such aid is an elementary measure of self-defence by the movement. In particular:—

1. Building and activising the Guilds, the Youth organisations, the local political parties and the educational activities.

2. Carrying local affiliation with Labour Parties into constant joint activities with them and with all local organisations having the same broad aims. Hastening the eventual affiliation nationally of the Labour and Co-operative Parties.

3. Bringing the co-op employees closer to the movement by (*a*) education and vocational training; (*b*) joint consultations with their Trade Unions on trade development problems; (*c*) adopting national minimum standards and applying the rate for the job principle.

The British Co-operative movement has exerted an influence far beyond the economic sphere. The successful organisation of so many millions of working-class consumers behind their own shops and factories has, amongst other things, brought thousands of men and women into active work within the labour movement, on public bodies and, of course, into practical experience of large-scale management inside the Co-operative movement itself. As a consumers' organisation it has fought the battles of all consumers, above all, during the First and Second World Wars, when its fight for rationing, in particular, has served the nation as a whole.

The Co-operatives, the Trades Unions, and the working-class political parties have great common interests and a deep mutual concern in preserving and expanding the strength of every unit within their alliance. Together, they constitute the leadership of the wide movement of the people towards fully democratic government and greatly improved social and economic conditions on the basis of total use of the nation's resources, technique and scientific equipment. Through partnership in this popular united struggle lies the way for defending the Co-operative movement itself and expressing its maximum role in the immediate period, one that precedes the attainment of the Socialist order wherein the Co-operatives have great essential tasks to fulfil.

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The Swing to the Left

by E. M. WINTERTON

THE new decisive phase of the war brings to a high point of urgency the question of the situation of the labour movement. The British people have been thrilled by the long-awaited invasion of Western Europe, by the victorious advance of the Allied armies in Italy after the fall of Rome, and by the resumption of the Red Army's shattering offensives. These events have filled the people with enthusiasm, in spite of the hardships and sacrifices which still lie ahead, because they spell, above all, one thing—such a gripping of the enemy from all sides as to hasten very greatly the end of the war.

There were already signs before the latest Allied victories that the question of what was going to happen in Britain at the end of the war was coming to the forefront in the mind of the people. Mr. Attlee put it in a nutshell when he said at Birmingham on May 13: "I am told everywhere that there is a great swing to the Left."

This swing takes a double form. Great masses of people who were previously politically inert have begun to worry about politics. The rank and file of the labour movement, after some years of growing indifference and even disgust, have turned to the affairs of their organisations with much more determination.

The awakening of political interest among people who were politically inactive displayed itself on numerous occasions during the last eighteen months, which were noted in the LABOUR MONTHLY—such as the eruption of popular enthusiasm when the Beveridge Report was published, and of even more intense popular hatred when Herbert Morrison released Sir Oswald Mosley. The big votes recorded in some recent by-elections, where opposition candidates stood on an unquestionably democratic platform (as in the cases of Miss Honor Balfour and Mrs. Corbett Ashby), indicated the same tendency. But in almost any field recent months have brought further striking illustrations.

Such, for example, was the election of a Labour majority in the "Forces Parliament" at Cairo, and the complete boycott by the troops of its carefully expurgated successor. Such has been the inflow of women engineers into the A.E.U., until today they number more than one-seventh of the total membership of the Union. Such was the deep feeling aroused throughout the country by the majority vote in the House of Commons for equal pay for women—and by the Government's action in forcing through a reversal of the vote, by making it a question of confidence. The intense fury aroused among Tory M.P.s and their press by the wide sales of *Your M.P.*—furnishing documentary evidence for judgment by the voters at the next General Election—also bears witness that the electorate is awake, and that the Tories know it.

When we turn to the labour movement, the parallel process of awakening (or re-awakening) is very marked. While the storm of protest aroused by Mr. Bevin's 1AA anti-strike regulation was not as loud and deep as that let loose by the release of Mosley—understandable because no Socialist or anti-Fascist can agree with strikes at the present time—the protests were sufficiently widespread to show that the rank and file took a more critical view of the employers' *bona fides* than did either the Labour Party Executive or the General Council of the T.U.C. It is instructive also to look at the decisions adopted by the trades councils. They include particularly such questions as increased forces' pay

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and allowances (Edmonton, Hammersmith, Hereford, Dagenham) or cheap food for old age pensioners (Yeovil, Stretford, Braintree, Glasgow), on which the strength of popular feeling during the last twelve months caused divisions in the Parliamentary Labour Party. It is also noteworthy that on such questions as detailed reconstruction plans of a local character (Southend, Brighton, Lowestoft, the Medway towns, Blackburn, Bideford, Wandsworth) or the need for a Trade Union recruiting campaign (Slough, Shoreditch, Chippenham), the local trades councils have shown themselves much in advance of their leaders.

Unfortunately, reawakened interest in political issues among the Labour rank and file has increasingly brought with it a reflected division among the ranks of Labour's representatives in Parliament: but these divisions themselves, to the extent that they reflect the determination of the rank and file, have a positive as well as a negative significance. A record of the issues involved has its point:—

February, 1943.
97 Labour votes against the Government on Beveridge (about 20 abstained).

May, 1943.
49 voted against Government on pensions (about 40 abstained).

December, 1943.
50 voted against Government on Mosley (about 50 abstained).

March, 1944.
About 90 voted against Government on the question of the school-leaving age.

April, 1944.
16 voted against Government on Regulation 1AA (89 abstained).

It is also instructive that the Scottish Trades Union Congress, at the end of April, 1944, passed resolutions with particular unanimity and enthusiasm on questions where the Labour Party leadership has shown itself peculiarly unable to strike out with an independent working-class line of its own. Thus, the Scottish T.U.C. wholeheartedly condemned Regulation 1AA. It condemned the Polish Government's persecution of Jewish and Ukrainian soldiers—which the Labour Party leaders have never brought themselves to the point of denouncing. The Congress demanded the nationalisation of the mines—which the Labour Party leaders, throughout the recent months of deep anxiety about the coal industry, have refrained from mentioning, except by an occasional discreet and non-committal reference in a *Daily Herald* editorial. The Congress declared for Indian independence. In contradistinction to official organs of the Labour Party like the *Daily Herald* and the *Labour Woman*, it proclaimed its faith in the decisions of Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Teheran, last December, as the cornerstone of the future world organisation of peace and security.

There is even a mathematical record of the increased activity of Labour's rank and file, in the fact, revealed by the Labour Party Executive's Report to this year's Annual Conference (now postponed) that in 1943 the individual membership of the party had taken a turn for the better. Ever since 1937 it had been falling; this was a natural consequence of the steady and virulent official opposition to any form of united anti-Fascist mass action, which began to have a baleful effect on the fate of nations when, in 1936/37, it took the form of support for "non-intervention" in the German-Italian war on the Spanish Republic. Last year for the first time there was a change—obviously because the centre of attention for active Socialists has shifted to the prospects which the organised common man has of changing the world himself after the war. The figures are unmistakable:

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1937	 447,000	individual members
1938	 429,000	,, ,,
1939	 409,000	,, ,,
1940	 304,000	,, ,,
1941	 227,000	,, ,,
1942	 219,000	,, ,,
1943	 236,000	,, ,,

These beginnings are small enough, but nevertheless they present a contrast to the slowness of response in the official policy of most Labour Party leaders.

What a blow to popular hopes of a democratic reform of the country, for example, is presented by the interim report of the Speaker's Conference! It is not surprising that the Tory majority should have rejected proportional representation, or votes at eighteen for the young people who are old enough to defend their country at that age: and that the Tories should have voted for retention of the extra vote for business men, or of the so-called "University vote," which in reality means the retention of a number of seats by the Tory Party with the halo of "academic impartiality" to recommend them. But the Labour rank and file might reasonably have expected the Labour M.P.s not to vote with the Tories.

On the international field, again, the Labour Party leaders have far from distinguished themselves. When the British and American press in the winter of 1942-3, was carrying on a campaign to besmirch the reputation of De Gaulle and the movement united around him, the *Daily Herald* was second to none in the virulence of its insinuations and accusations. Similarly, the Labour Party leaders and the *Daily Herald* supported the London Polish émigrés in their anti-Soviet drive at the beginning of 1943, and condemned the Soviet Union for defending itself in the only way it could. At frequent intervals the *Daily Herald* has, in recent months, published editorials chiding the Allied leaders for failing to establish effective machinery of political collaboration. But it has studiously refrained from challenging the insidious and persistent campaign by General Smuts and a host of Tory imitators for a "Western bloc" in Europe under British leadership, after the war—the very antithesis of the Teheran agreement, and fraught with peril of a new war.

The latter feature is all the more surprising because, in preparation for the Annual Conference, the Labour Party Executive had published a report on post-war international reconstruction which was universally accepted (save by the Munichites) as a useful contribution to sane discussion on the subject. Obviously, however, the Executive's reports do not necessarily govern the day-to-day actions of politicians and editors. The clear and bold report on agriculture published by the Executive, with its unambiguous declaration in favour of land nationalisation, contrasts unflatteringly, even when allowance is made for the position of cabinet ministers in a coalition, with the timidity of Labour Party leaders on the coal question, noted earlier. On the other hand, the Executive's report on the question of colonies, reviewed some months ago in these columns, was an exceptionally feeble and uninspiring document, offering no real hope to the colonial peoples, and less than none to India.

Where the dominant section of the Labour Party Executive has shown real energy, as always, is in the sphere of bans and splits. Comically enough, the same Annual Report which announces the forthcoming despatch of an official delegation to Moscow, to discuss problems of international unity with the leaders of the Communist Party there, contains the announcement that the ban on Anglo-Soviet

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Friendship Committees of previous years has been followed up, during the last twelve months, by a ban on the National Council for British-Soviet Unity. Of course, by comparison with the campaign of the official organ of the London Labour Party against "Moscow dictatorship" and the "GPU-controlled Communist Parties" (Yes, still continuing in May, 1944), the Transport House ban on popular civic bodies to organise Anglo-Soviet Friendship may seem a trifle—particularly as it is defied by many active local Labour people. But what a petty, mean, fossilised outlook such bans reveal! Nor are they alone of their kind. As religiously as in former years, the Labour Party leaders did their best to split the workers in 1944 in the celebration of May Day. Undeterred by the fact that the General Council had withdrawn the notorious "Black Circular" prohibiting Communist delegates from Trade Unions, the Labour Party Executive, again in May, 1944, published strict instructions to its local bodies that the ban must be observed, so far as they were concerned. The tale could be continued, but it gives no pleasure in the telling.

The Labour rank and file and constituent bodies are doing something to redress matters, it is true. May Day demonstrations in Glasgow and Manchester, for example, were united and imposing. The Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U. has asked the City Labour Party to discuss with the Communist Party the question of an agreed progressive candidate in one of the city constituencies; and much prominence has been given to the proposal of the Oxford University Labour Party, which was to have been moved at the Labour Party Conference, that Transport House should call an all-in conference of working-class and other progressive organisations, with a view to an electoral agreement in good time. The very suggestion in a letter from Mr. Gardner, General Secretary of the A.E.U., that his executive favoured an all-in conference for working-class unity, produced a great number of resolutions of support from Trade Union executives and district committees, from trades councils and local Labour Parties.

This evidence of a general desire for unity (still not wide enough, when the urgency of the question is borne in mind) seems not to affect elements in the leadership of the Labour Party. Their enthusiasm for splits is only the other side of their singular passivity towards the "swing to the Left" which they themselves admit. Both signify abdication of leadership. Abdication of Labour leadership had the most disastrous results in the years before the war, when Chamberlain's policy of appeasement of Fascism was arousing millions in angry protest—millions who found themselves leaderless. In the present decisive stage of the war, and in the first post-war period to which the world begins to look forward, the abdication of the Labour Party leadership may have the most serious consequences. For if there is one thing clear, it is that upon British Labour devolves the first responsibility for organising Britain on new lines of political and economic democracy after the war, and thereby of putting forward Britain as a firm and unshakable pillar of world democracy, by the side of the Soviet Union and the U.S.A.

It would have been the task of the Labour Party Conference to take up this responsibility. It has been postponed. But when it meets the development of events and the process of discussion in the constituent bodies between now and that date will make that responsibility all the greater.

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Book Review

Professorial Jungle-Worshipper

The Road to Serfdom by F. A. Hayek (Routledge, 10*s* 6*d*).

Professor Dr. Friedrich August von Hayek is today the darling of the Kemsley press and the big monopolists. In lectures, books or articles in the Sunday press this professor from Austria invokes the principles of economic "freedom" (i.e., the freedom of the jungle) to denounce all Socialism, Communism, State Control or Planning as slavery and the starting-point of Fascism. His book, *The Road to Serfdom*, which has been loudly acclaimed in the Conservative press, is a contribution to the current reactionary campaign against Socialism or the maintenance of State control after the war. Its contents are mainly of interest as a demonstration of the depths to which apologetic economics have descended, following the collapse of the old assumptions of capitalist economic theory.

When Herbert Spencer in 1884 wrote *The Coming Slavery* to denounce the socialist propaganda of the newly-founded Social Democratic Federation, he was, at any rate, writing within a society which could appear to be founded on the basis of liberal competitive capitalism; and only a Marxist could discern the inner laws of motion and new trends which were preparing the future. But today, sixty years later, in the age of fully developed monopoly capitalism, when the great elephants of monopoly dominate the jungle and reduce the mass to regimented subjection, to write paeans in praise of "freedom of enterprise" and denounce Socialism as "the road to serfdom" is a less pardonable illusion.

Professor von Hayek is a disciple of the school, familiar in Transport House, which identifies Fascism and Communism, and finds the Socialist Soviet Union and Hitler - Germany indistinguishable "totalitarian" systems. He knows all about the Soviet Union; for he has studied profoundly such authorities as Max Eastman, W. H. Chamberlin and similar scientific sources, from whom he quotes freely for "evidence." But he goes a little further than Transport House; for he includes the theories of the Labour Party in his general anathema. No wonder he is the idol of the *Daily Sketch* and Lord Kemsley, that is, of the most reactionary sections of monopoly capital.

As for monopoly, which might appear to drive a coach and four through all his theories of capitalist "freedom," his explanation is simple. He admits that liberal free trade capitalism has everywhere given place to monopoly capitalism. But he argues that it need not have done so, that it was "not inevitable," that it was all due to a chapter of accidents or wrong policies or mistaken notions in each country. In Germany it was due to Bismarck, in the United States to high protection, and in Britain to the National Government. Why the ruling class got these wrong ideas in each country remains unexplained; for our professor, true to type, is an uncompromising idealist ("in social evolution nothing is inevitable but thinking makes it so"—p. 35). Thus his "science" of history successfully excludes the actual historical process from the operation of any scientific laws; and his "science" of the abstract laws of imaginary individualist economics remains pure and undefiled, remote from any contact with the real world.

Released in this simple fashion from any contact with sordid reality, his phantasy of "freedom" of the capitalist world is able to soar to great heights. "Money in existing society opens an astounding range of choice to the poor man" (p. 67) —so astounding that half the population before the war "chose" to be undernourished. He admires the "free choice of occupation" in existing society (p. 71). Evidently some "choose" to be coalminers, shop assistants or navvies; while others "choose" to be coalowners, company directors or members of the Stock Exchange; there is no accounting for tastes. To be fair to him, he admits that "a financial sacrifice" is necessary to obtain some coveted positions; so that those miserly souls who grudge the necessary £4,000 to acquire a seat on the Stock Exchange and prefer to earn a living as a dustman have only themselves to blame.

The professor wields a powerful bludgeon against critics of capitalism. Allegations about "potential plenty," i.e., un-

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used productive power, are rapidly dismissed as "irresponsible talk," "palpably untrue," "dishonest," "false" (p. 73). These epithets absolve our learned sage from any attempt to consider the abundantly available concrete facts about unused productive power in Britain or the United States, which have been so formidably reinforced by war experience. Similarly, any unkind references to "the occasional destruction of wheat, coffee, etc.," are dismissed as "intellectual dishonesty" (p. 151).

And monopoly? When all is said and done, when all the arguments have been paraded to prove that it "need not" have happened and "ought not" to have happened, what is to be done about it, now that it is here? It is evident that once the stage of monopolist large-scale economy has been reached, the only effective alternatives become public organisation, requiring social ownership, or private irresponsible autocracy over the lives of men. What does the lover of "freedom" propose to do? Does he propose, like Belloc, whom he quotes with approval, and as the logic of his argument should lead, to go back to small production, break up the large units and "distribute" private property? Unless he advocates such a fanciful imaginary solution, his programme of "freedom" becomes a programme of freedom for the monopolist tigers of the jungle. At this point the otherwise so voluble and confident professor becomes hesitant and falters. Finally he throws out the suggestion towards the end:—

> The probability is that wherever monopoly is really inevitable, the plan which used to be preferred by the Americans, of a strong State control over private monopolies, if consistently pursued, offers a better chance of satisfactory results than State management (p. 147).

So the circular argument appears to have come back to State control after all—in complete contradiction to the whole preceding argument, and without any attempt seriously to consider what this involves in practice

But the real practical programme appears in the section on post-war prospects. Professor Hayek knows that "we shall at first be poor, very poor indeed" ("we," of course, does not include Lord Kemsley). "No considerations for the accustomed standards of particular groups" must be allowed to stand in the way of post-war "adaptation." "Many people," he says, "if they are to be paid according to what their services will then be worth to society" will "have to be content with a lowering of their material position relative to that of others." He continues:—

> "If, then, the Trade Unions successfully resist any lowering of the wages of the particular groups in question, there will be only two alternatives open: either coercion will have to be used, i.e., certain individuals will have to be selected for compulsory transfer to other and relatively less well paid positions; or those who can no longer be employed at the relatively high wages they have earned during the war must be allowed to remain unemployed till they are willing to accept work at a lower wage" (p. 153-4).

Brass tacks at last. "Freedom" has descended from the clouds to solid earth with a bump. The professor has earned his keep.

Madame Roland is reported to have declared on her way to the guillotine: "O Freedom, what crimes are committed in thy name!" But even she had not foreseen Lord Kemsley, Sir Ernest Benn and Professor von Hayek. R. P. D.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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